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DAILY QUIZ — SOLVED

Daily Quiz -- May 14, 2026

14 May 2026



CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)

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DAILY QUIZ — SOLVED ANSWER KEY

Daily Quiz -- May 14, 2026

14 May 2026 · 15 Questions · Answers & Explanations Included

Question 1

of 15

[Source →](#)

The National Testing Agency cancelled NEET-UG 2026 on May 12, 2026 after a confirmed paper leak. Which of the following statements is correct?

- A NEET-UG is conducted by the Union Public Service Commission under Article 320
- B The NTA is a society registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, established in 2017 under the Ministry of Education; the Centre handed the NEET-UG 2026 paper-leak probe to the CBI and Rajasthan SOG arrested two suspects in Sikar ✓
- C The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 punishes paper leaks with a maximum of one year imprisonment only
- D NEET-UG was made statutory by the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: The National Testing Agency (NTA) was established in 2017 as a society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 under the Ministry of Education. After confirming a leak in NEET-UG 2026 (held May 3, 2026), the NTA cancelled the exam on May 12, 2026, and the Centre referred the matter to the CBI. The Rajasthan Special Operations Group (SOG) had earlier arrested Manish Yadav and Rakesh Mandavriya in Sikar.

ANALYSIS: NEET-UG is statutorily mandated by Section 14 of the National Medical Commission Act, 2019 (which replaced the IMC Act, 1956). The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 punishes paper leaks with up to 10 years imprisonment and up to Rs 1 crore fine -- not one year.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

NEET-UG (National Eligibility cum Entrance Test -- Undergraduate) is the single-window national entrance for MBBS, BDS and Ayush courses under Section 14 of the National Medical Commission Act, 2019. The NMC Act replaced the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956 and created the National Medical Commission.

NEET was made compulsory after the Supreme Court ruling in *Modern Dental College v. State of MP* (2016). The NTA conducts JEE (Main), NEET-UG, CUET-UG/PG, UGC-NET, CSIR-UGC-NET, NCHM-JEE, NID-DAT and NIFT entrance examinations across about 3.5-4 crore unique candidates annually.

The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 punishes leaks with imprisonment of 3-10 years, fine up to Rs 1 crore for individuals and minimum Rs 1 crore for entities, with non-bailable, non-compoundable, cognizable offences.

The CBI derives its powers from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946 and is functionally placed under the DoPT.

Q1
 **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS2 -- governance, statutory and regulatory bodies, education policy.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

NTA, NEET-UG, NMC Act 2019, Public Examinations Act 2024, CBI, DSPE Act, Article 246 Entry 66.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Calling NEET-UG a UPSC examination -- UPSC is a constitutional body (Article 315) that conducts civil services and a separate set of examinations; NEET is conducted by the NTA.

 **EXAM TIP**

NTA = society under 1860 Act; established 2017; under Ministry of Education.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should examinations of this scale be moved entirely to computer-based testing as the Radhakrishnan Committee 2024 recommended?

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Question 2

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[Source →](#)

WPI inflation in April 2026 rose to 8.30 per cent year-on-year (42-month high) from 3.88 per cent in March 2026. Which of the following statements is correct about the Wholesale Price Index in India?

- A WPI is compiled by the National Statistical Office (NSO) under MoSPI; base year 2012; covers services and goods
- B WPI is compiled by the Office of the Economic Adviser, DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce and Industry; base year 2011-12; excludes services; in April 2026 the Fuel & Power group rose 24.71 per cent year-on-year ✓
- C WPI is the inflation target anchor of the RBI Monetary Policy Committee
- D WPI is published every quarter by the Reserve Bank of India

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: WPI is compiled by the Office of the Economic Adviser, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, with base year 2011-12. It excludes services.

The April 2026 print released on May 14, 2026 saw headline WPI rise to 8.30 per cent year-on-year, driven by Fuel & Power +24.71 per cent year-on-year (Petrol +32.40 per cent; HSD +25.19 per cent). **ANALYSIS:** WPI is not the monetary-policy anchor -- the flexible inflation targeting framework under Section 45ZA-ZN of the RBI Act, 1934 (inserted 2016) anchors on CPI-Combined (4 per cent +/- 2 per cent) compiled by NSO. WPI is released monthly, around the 14th.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

WPI structure: Primary Articles (weight 22.62 per cent), Fuel & Power (13.15 per cent), Manufactured Products (64.23 per cent). CPI-Combined, compiled by NSO with base 2012, includes both goods and services and weights services at about 28 per cent.

WPI excludes taxes while CPI includes them. The 6-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) operates under Section 45ZA of the RBI Act, 1934 -- three RBI members (Governor, Deputy Governor in charge of monetary policy, one Executive Director) and three external members nominated by the Central Government; the Governor has a casting vote.

The MPC reviews the policy repo rate at least four times a year (usually six). Inflation target valid till 2026; 4 per cent +/- 2 per cent on CPI-Combined.

India imports over 85 per cent of crude requirements, making fuel WPI highly sensitive to West Asia tensions and the Strait of Hormuz risk premium.

Q2  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**


GS3 -- Indian economy, inflation, monetary policy; GS2 -- statutory bodies (RBI).

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

WPI, CPI-Combined, inflation targeting, MPC, RBI Act 1934 Section 45ZA, DPIIT, MoSPI.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Confusing WPI's compilation agency -- it is the Office of the Economic Adviser DPIIT (Commerce Ministry), not NSO (Statistics Ministry).

 **EXAM TIP**

WPI base 2011-12; CPI-Combined base 2012; WPI excludes services; CPI includes services; MPC anchors on CPI-Combined.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should India revise the WPI base year to 2017-18 given structural change in the economy?

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Question 3

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[Source →](#)

The Union Cabinet on May 13, 2026 approved a Rs 37,500 crore scheme to promote coal and lignite gasification. Which of the following is correct about coal gasification?

- A** Coal gasification converts coal/lignite into syngas (carbon monoxide + hydrogen) for use as feedstock for fertiliser, methanol, SNG, DRI and hydrogen; the scheme targets about 75 MT of gasified coal/lignite ✓
- B** Coal gasification produces only carbon dioxide and water
- C** India has no proven coal reserves and is fully dependent on imports
- D** The scheme is administered by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: Coal gasification is a thermo-chemical conversion of coal/lignite into syngas -- a mixture of carbon monoxide (CO) and hydrogen (H₂) -- at high temperature with controlled oxygen and steam. Syngas is the feedstock for urea, methanol, synthetic natural gas (SNG), direct reduced iron (DRI), olefins and hydrogen.

The May 13, 2026 scheme targets about 75 MT of gasification, with capital subsidy up to 20 per cent of plant and machinery cost. **ANALYSIS:** India has the 5th largest coal reserves globally (300+ billion tonnes proven). The implementing Ministry is the Ministry of Coal, not MoP&NG. The National Coal Gasification Mission targets 100 MT by 2030.

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

India has the 5th largest coal reserves in the world (after US, Russia, Australia, China). India produced about 997 MT of coal in FY 2024-25, with Coal India Limited (CIL) accounting for about 75 per cent.

CIL was created under the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973. Lignite (brown coal) is concentrated in Neyveli (Tamil Nadu, NLCIL), Mata-no-Madh and Panandhro (Gujarat), and Barsingsar (Rajasthan).

Syngas downstream uses: urea via ammonia synthesis (replaces imports of 25-30 per cent of urea), methanol (NITI Aayog Methanol Economy Programme, 2016), SNG (pipeline gas), DRI (replaces coking coal in steel-making). The 2026 scheme is the fiscal-incentive vertical under the National Coal Gasification Mission (conceptualised in 2020).

India's coking coal imports are about 50-55 MT/year, the principal target of substitution. India announced net-zero by 2070 at COP26 Glasgow (November 2021); coal gasification with CCUS layering is part of the bridge pathway.

Q3  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS3 -- economy, energy, environment; GS2 -- Government policies.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Syngas, coal gasification, methanol economy, CCUS, National Coal Gasification Mission, net-zero 2070.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Conflating coal gasification with combustion -- gasification produces syngas (a chemical feedstock), not direct heat.

 **EXAM TIP**

Syngas = CO + H₂; downstream = urea, methanol, SNG, DRI, hydrogen.

 **INTERVIEW**

Is coal gasification a credible bridge to net-zero by 2070 or a distraction from renewables scale-up?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 4

of 15

[Source →](#)

The Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool (BMIP), launched on May 12, 2026, has which of the following features?

- A Underwriting capacity USD 1.5 billion; sovereign guarantee Rs 12,980 crore; administered by GIC Re; four risk categories including War Risk; covers Indian-flagged or Indian-controlled vessels and any vessel originating from or destined for an Indian port ✓**
- B Underwriting capacity USD 50 billion with full Government funding
- C Operated by SEBI to regulate maritime insurance
- D Mandatory for all global shipping irrespective of origin or destination

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
EXPLANATION

FACT: The BMIP was approved by the Union Cabinet in April 2026 and operationalised on May 12, 2026. It has an aggregate underwriting capacity of USD 1.5 billion backed by a sovereign guarantee of Rs 12,980 crore (~USD 1.4 billion).

General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC Re) is the Pool Administrator. Four risk categories are covered -- Hull & Machinery, Cargo, Protection & Indemnity (P&I), and War Risk.

The pool covers Indian-flagged or Indian-controlled vessels and any vessel originating from or destined for an Indian port. **ANALYSIS:** SEBI regulates the securities market, not insurance -- insurance is regulated by IRDAI under the IRDA Act, 1999.

The pool was driven by the spike in war-risk premia following Strait of Hormuz tensions and the ADNOC Habshan partial outage in April 2026.

CONCEPT NOTE

GIC Re (General Insurance Corporation of India) was set up in 1972 and remains India's sole national reinsurer. IRDAI is the statutory regulator under the IRDA Act, 1999, with headquarters at Hyderabad.

The insurance FDI cap has been progressively raised: 49 per cent (Insurance Laws (Amendment) Act, 2015), 74 per cent (Finance Act, 2021), and 100 per cent under the automatic route in 2026. International precedents for sovereign-backed pools include Pool Re (UK, 1993, for terrorism risk), TRIA (US Terrorism Risk Insurance Act, 2002), and the Japan Earthquake Reinsurance Pool.

The Marine Insurance Act, 1963 in India follows the UK Marine Insurance Act, 1906. P&I (Protection and Indemnity) is third-party liability cover -- crew injury, pollution, wreck removal, cargo damage -- globally dominated by the International Group of P&I Clubs (13 mutual clubs).

Q4  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS3 -- economy, insurance, energy security, maritime sector; GS2 -- governance and statutory bodies.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

BMIP, GIC Re, IRDAI, P&I, Maritime India Vision 2030, sovereign guarantee, Pool Re.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Assigning insurance regulation to SEBI -- insurance is regulated by IRDAI under the 1999 Act.

 **EXAM TIP**

BMIP -- USD 1.5 bn capacity; Rs 12,980 cr sovereign guarantee; GIC Re administrator; covers H&M, Cargo, P&I, War Risk.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should sovereign-backed pools become the norm for strategic-risk insurance categories in India?

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Question 5

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[Source →](#)

The Kimberley Process Intersessional Meeting 2026 (May 11-14) is being hosted by India at Mumbai. Which of the following is correct?

- A** India is the Kimberley Process Chair for 2026 with UAE as Vice-Chair; theme is the "3Cs" -- Credibility, Compliance, Consumer Confidence; the KP Certification Scheme has been in force since 2003 ✓
- B** The Kimberley Process is a UN treaty body created under the United Nations Charter
- C** The KP Certification Scheme (KPCS) has been in force since 1990
- D** India hosts the meeting as a non-Participant observer

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: India assumed the Kimberley Process Chairship on January 1, 2026 with the UAE as Vice-Chair (and the next Chair in 2027). The 2026 theme is "3Cs" -- Credibility, Compliance, Consumer Confidence.

The KP Certification Scheme (KPCS) has been in force since January 1, 2003. The KP itself was launched at Kimberley, South Africa, in May 2000 and endorsed by UN General Assembly Resolution 55/56 in December 2000.

ANALYSIS: The Kimberley Process is not a UN treaty body -- it is a joint Government-industry-civil society initiative endorsed (not created) by the UN. India is a Participant (founding member) and is the world's largest diamond cutting and polishing hub (~90 per cent by volume), processing rough imports into polished exports.



 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The Kimberley Process has 60 Participants representing 86 countries (the EU is counted as one Participant for its 27 member states). Two Observers participate -- the World Diamond Council (industry) and the Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition.

A "conflict diamond" is defined in UN GA Resolution 55/56 (December 1, 2000) as a rough diamond used by rebel movements to finance war against legitimate Governments -- a narrow definition often criticised for excluding State-sponsored violence, environmental damage and human-rights abuses. India has chaired the KP in 2008 and 2019, and again in 2026.

The implementation partner in India is the Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC), set up in 1966 under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Surat is India's principal diamond cutting hub (~80 per cent of polished output) and the Bharat Diamond Bourse at BKC, Mumbai (inaugurated November 2010) is the world's largest diamond trading complex by floor area.

Q5  **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS2 -- international relations, international institutions; GS3 -- gems and jewellery exports.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	Kimberley Process, KPCS, conflict diamond, GJEPC, Surat, Bharat Diamond Bourse.
 COMMON MISTAKE	Calling the Kimberley Process a UN treaty body -- it is a joint Government-industry-civil society arrangement merely endorsed by UNGA.
 EXAM TIP	KP launched 2000; KPCS in force 2003; 60 Participants representing 86 countries; India chaired in 2008, 2019, 2026.
 INTERVIEW	Should the conflict-diamond definition be expanded to include State-sponsored violence and environmental damage?

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Question 6

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PM Narendra Modi's five-nation tour (May 15-20, 2026) culminates with the 3rd India-Nordic Summit. Where and when is this summit, and which is the second of the two previous India-Nordic Summits?

A Oslo, May 19, 2026; previous summits were at Stockholm 2018 and Copenhagen 2022 ✓

B Helsinki, May 18, 2026; previous summits were at Reykjavik 2016 and Stockholm 2020

C Copenhagen, May 20, 2026; previous summit at Oslo 2019 only

D New Delhi, May 19, 2026; the previous summit was at New Delhi 2018

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
EXPLANATION

FACT: The 3rd India-Nordic Summit is being hosted at Oslo, Norway on May 19, 2026. The first India-Nordic Summit was held at Stockholm in April 2018, and the second at Copenhagen in May 2022.

The 2026 Summit is also the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Norway in 43 years -- the last being Indira Gandhi in 1983. **ANALYSIS:** Attendees include the Prime Ministers of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Norway (the Nordic 5).

Likely themes are energy transition, green hydrogen, defence (Saab, Kongsberg), space, Arctic cooperation and supply-chain resilience. The backdrop is the India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) operational since October 2025.

CONCEPT NOTE

The Nordic 5 are Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. EFTA (European Free Trade Association, 1960) has four members -- Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

The India-EFTA TEPA was signed on March 10, 2024 and entered into force in October 2025; it commits EFTA to USD 100 billion of investment in India over 15 years. India has been a Permanent Observer at the Arctic Council since 2013, and released its Arctic Policy in March 2022.

India's Arctic research station Himadri at Ny-Alesund, Svalbard has been operational since 2008 under the NCPOR (National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research), Goa, under the Ministry of Earth Sciences. India-Nordic bilateral trade is approximately USD 19 billion (2024).

Norway operates the Government Pension Fund Global, the world's largest sovereign wealth fund (~USD 1.7 trillion AUM).

Q6
 **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS2 -- IR, regional groupings, Arctic; GS3 -- economy, trade agreements.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

India-Nordic Summit, EFTA TEPA, Arctic Policy 2022, Himadri, NCPOR, IMEC.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Confusing EFTA membership (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland) with the Nordic 5 (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden) -- only Iceland and Norway are in both.

 **EXAM TIP**

India-Nordic Summits: I -- Stockholm 2018; II -- Copenhagen 2022; III -- Oslo 2026.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should India treat the Nordic states as a distinct strategic cluster, separate from its broader EU engagement?

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Question 7

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[Source →](#)

The South Coast Railway (SCoR) was notified as India's 18th Railway Zone on May 4, 2026. Which of the following statements is correct?

- A** SCoR's headquarters is at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh; operations begin June 1, 2026; it has four divisions -- Vijayawada, Guntur and Guntakal (carved from South Central Railway) and a new Visakhapatnam Division (carved from the Waltair Division of East Coast Railway); notification under Section 3(4) of the Railways Act, 1989; fulfils a commitment under the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014 ✓
- B** SCoR's HQ is at Bhubaneswar, Odisha and it has two divisions
- C** SCoR was created under Article 371 by Presidential Order
- D** Indian Railways had 25 zones before SCoR was added

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

FACT: The South Coast Railway was notified by Gazette on May 4, 2026 as the 18th Zone of Indian Railways with HQ at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. Operations begin June 1, 2026.

It has four divisions -- Vijayawada, Guntur and Guntakal (carved from South Central Railway) and a new Visakhapatnam Division (carved from the Waltair Division of East Coast Railway). Notification was issued under Section 3(4) of the Railways Act, 1989.

It fulfils a transitional commitment under the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014. **ANALYSIS:** Indian Railways had 17 zones before SCoR; railways are a Union subject (List I, Entry 22), so zone creation is a plenary executive function of the Centre.

CONCEPT NOTE

Section 3(4) of the Railways Act, 1989 empowers the Central Government to modify the limits of, or create, a Railway zone by notification. The AP Reorganisation Act, 2014 was enacted on March 2, 2014; Telangana was formed on June 2, 2014; the residuary AP commitments under Schedule XIII included a new railway zone, special category status, Polavaram project, new High Court, AIIMS Mangalagiri and others.

The earlier 17 Indian Railway zones were: Central, Eastern, East-Central, East-Coast, Northern, North-Central, North-Eastern, Northeast-Frontier, North-Western, Southern, South-Central, South-East-Central, South-Eastern, South-Western, Western, West-Central, Metro Railway Kolkata (declared a zone in 2010, functioning since 1984). Indian Railways runs about 13,200 trains per day, carries about 23 million passengers/day and 3 million tonnes of freight/day, and is the world's fourth largest network.

The Railway Board was restructured to a five-member body in December 2019 with a merged CEO & Chairman post. The Indian Railway Management Service (IRMS) was created in 2019 by merging eight Group A services.

Q7
 **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS2 -- polity, federalism, statutory residuary commitments; GS3 -- infrastructure.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

South Coast Railway, Section 3(4) Railways Act 1989, AP Reorganisation Act 2014, Union List Entry 22, IRMS.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Counting Konkan Railway among the Indian Railway zones -- it is a separate corporate entity (Konkan Railway Corporation Limited), not a zone.

 **EXAM TIP**

SCoR = 18th zone; HQ Visakhapatnam; four divisions = Vijayawada + Guntur + Guntakal + new Visakhapatnam.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should the Indian Railways move from a zonal to a corporate-business-unit structure on the lines of restructured DDA-PSU models?

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Question 8

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The National Green Hydrogen Mission, flagged by Shaktikanta Das at the CII Annual Business Summit 2026 on May 12, 2026 as a top energy-transition priority, was approved by the Cabinet in 2023. Which of the following is correct about NGHM and SIGHT?

- A** Outlay Rs 19,744 crore; target 5 MMT/year of green hydrogen by 2030; 125 GW associated renewable capacity; SIGHT is the flagship sub-scheme with two components -- electrolyser manufacturing and green hydrogen production ✓
- B** Outlay Rs 1.5 lakh crore; target 50 MMT/year by 2030; SIGHT is a satellite mission
- C** NGHM produces grey hydrogen via steam methane reforming with no renewable linkage
- D** Implemented by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, not MNRE

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

FACT: The National Green Hydrogen Mission was approved by the Cabinet on January 4, 2023 with an outlay of Rs 19,744 crore (FY 2023-24 to 2029-30). The target is 5 million metric tonnes (MMT) of green hydrogen production per year by 2030, with 125 GW of associated renewable energy capacity.

Total investment expected is about Rs 8 lakh crore, with 6 lakh+ jobs. SIGHT (Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition) is the flagship sub-scheme with two components -- SIGHT Mode 1 for electrolyser manufacturing and SIGHT Mode 2 for green hydrogen production.

ANALYSIS: Green hydrogen is produced by electrolysis of water using renewable electricity (zero direct CO₂); grey hydrogen is produced via steam methane reforming; blue hydrogen adds CCUS to grey. The implementing Ministry is MNRE; SECI is the implementing agency for SIGHT.

CONCEPT NOTE

India's NDC commitments (updated 2022): 50 per cent non-fossil installed power capacity by 2030, 45 per cent reduction in emissions intensity (versus 2005), and net-zero by 2070 (announced at COP26 Glasgow, November 2021). SATAT (Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation) was launched on October 1, 2018 by MoP&NG to promote Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) with 15+ year offtake guarantees from oil PSUs.

India's Ethanol Blending Programme targets 20 per cent ethanol blending (E20) by 2025-26; achieved blending is about 14-15 per cent. The Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN Yojana (2019) supports second-generation ethanol plants using agricultural residue.

The 5th iGoM (Informal Empowered Group of Ministers) on energy supply chain disruption is chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. Shaktikanta Das served as RBI Governor from December 12, 2018 to December 10, 2024 and thereafter as Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister.

Q8
 **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS3 -- environment, energy, climate, S&T; GS2 -- policies and schemes.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

NGHM, SIGHT, SECI, MNRE, SATAT, EBP, net-zero 2070, hard-to-abate sectors.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Confusing SIGHT (a hydrogen sub-scheme) with a satellite mission or remote-sensing programme.

 **EXAM TIP**

NGHM = Rs 19,744 cr; 5 MMT/year by 2030; 125 GW RE; SIGHT = electrolyser manufacturing + green hydrogen production.

 **INTERVIEW**

Is green hydrogen economically viable without continued subsidy support beyond 2030?

 [Read Full Article →](#)

Question 9

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[Source →](#)

Consider the following statements about the CBI:

- 1 It was established by an executive order in 1963.
- 2 Its statutory powers derive from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946.
- 3 It functions under the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).
- 4 Section 6 of the DSPE Act requires the consent of the State Government for CBI to investigate in that State, except for offences relating to Union employees or institutions. Which statements are correct?

A 1, 2 and 3 only

B 1, 2, 3 and 4 ✓

C 2 and 4 only

D 1 and 3 only

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

FACT: All four statements are correct. The CBI was established by a Government of India Resolution dated April 1, 1963.

Its statutory powers derive from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946 (originally enacted to investigate war-related bribery cases). It is administratively under the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).

Section 6 of the DSPE Act requires the consent of the State Government for investigation within that State -- the consent may be specific (case-by-case) or general (standing consent). Withdrawal of general consent (by States such as West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Kerala in recent years) does not bar CBI in matters involving Union employees, institutions, or Central laws.

ANALYSIS: In the NEET-UG 2026 case, CBI jurisdiction is straightforward because NTA is a Union institution; State consent is not required.

CONCEPT NOTE

The CBI's structure includes the Anti-Corruption Division, Special Crimes Division, Economic Offences Division, Directorate of Prosecution and Policy & Coordination Division. The Director, CBI is appointed under Section 4A of the DSPE Act (inserted by the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013) by a committee comprising the Prime Minister, the Leader of Opposition (or leader of the single largest Opposition party) and the Chief Justice of India or his nominee.

The Director has a fixed two-year tenure (extendable up to a maximum of five years after the 2021 amendment). Vineet Joshi v. State of Manipur (2019), Vineet Narain v. Union of India (1997), and Subramanian Swamy v. Director, CBI (2014) are landmark cases concerning CBI autonomy and Section 6A of DSPE. The Lokpal (Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013) has supervisory authority over CBI in matters referred to it.

Q9  **CONCEPT KIT**
 **CROSS-PAPER**

GS2 -- polity, statutory and regulatory bodies, internal security.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

CBI, DSPE Act 1946, Section 6, general consent, DoPT, Lokpal Act 2013, Vineet Narain.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Calling CBI a constitutional body -- it is a statutory body deriving authority from the DSPE Act, 1946.

 **EXAM TIP**

CBI established 1963 by Resolution; DSPE Act 1946 is the statutory basis; under DoPT; Director appointed by committee of PM, LoP, CJI.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should the CBI be brought under a separate statute (a "CBI Act") instead of operating under the colonial-era DSPE Act?

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Question 10

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India's Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR), the principal energy-security buffer against Strait of Hormuz disruption, are located at which sites under Phase I?

- A** Visakhapatnam, Mangaluru and Padur -- total 5.33 MMT, operated by ISPRL under MoP&NG, operational since 2018 ✓
- B** Mumbai, Kandla and Chennai -- total 10 MMT
- C** Vadinar, Jamnagar and Mundra -- private refinery storage
- D** Bharuch, Hazira and Dahej -- gas storage caverns only

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

FACT: Phase I of India's Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) was operationalised since 2018 with three sites -- Visakhapatnam (1.33 MMT), Mangaluru (1.5 MMT) and Padur (2.5 MMT) -- totalling 5.33 MMT. They are operated by Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd (ISPRL), a wholly owned subsidiary of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. **ANALYSIS:** Phase II adds approximately 6.5 MMT at Chandikhol (Odisha) and expansion at Padur, taking total SPR capacity towards 11-12 MMT (about 22 days of net imports).






India imports more than 85 per cent of its crude requirements, and the Strait of Hormuz carries about 20-21 mb/d (~20-25 per cent of global seaborne oil trade) -- making the SPR a strategic asset against precisely such disruption.

CONCEPT NOTE

ISPRL (Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd) was created in 2004 as a Special Purpose Vehicle, originally under Oil Industry Development Board, then transferred to MoP&NG. India joined the International Energy Agency (IEA) as an Association country in 2017 -- IEA standards recommend 90 days of net imports as strategic stockholding; India's SPR currently covers about 10-12 days of net imports (rising to 22 days with Phase II). The five-largest crude oil suppliers to India in recent fiscal years have rotated between Russia (post-2022 surge), Iraq, Saudi Arabia, UAE and the US. India operates additional commercial inventories at refineries (about 65 days).

The Strait of Hormuz separates Iran from Oman/UAE and carries about 20-21 mb/d. The principal regional bypasses are the Habshan-Fujairah ADCOP pipeline (UAE, ~1.5-1.8 mb/d, commissioned 2012) and Saudi Arabia's East-West Petroline (~5 mb/d).

Q10  **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS3 -- energy security, infrastructure; GS2 -- IR, West Asia.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	SPR, ISPRL, IEA, Strait of Hormuz, ADCOP, Petroline, BMIP, energy security.
 COMMON MISTAKE	Citing only Visakhapatnam (Phase I has three sites).
 EXAM TIP	SPR Phase I = Visakhapatnam (1.33) + Mangaluru (1.5) + Padur (2.5) = 5.33 MMT; operational since 2018.
 INTERVIEW	Should India accelerate SPR Phase II and consider Phase III given protracted West Asia instability?

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Question 11

of 15

[Source →](#)

The India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA), referenced in the May 2026 PM Europe tour, has which of the following features?

- A** Signed March 10, 2024; in force since October 2025; EFTA members are Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland; commits EFTA to USD 100 billion of investment in India over 15 years ✓
- B** Signed 2019; in force since 2020; EFTA includes Germany and France
- C** A free-trade agreement between India and the European Union
- D** A military pact between India and the Nordic 5

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: The India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) was signed on March 10, 2024 and entered into force in October 2025. EFTA (European Free Trade Association, established in 1960) has four members -- Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

The Agreement commits EFTA to USD 100 billion of investment in India over 15 years, in exchange for staggered tariff concessions on EFTA exports to India. **ANALYSIS:** EFTA is distinct from the European Union -- it was founded by countries that chose not to join the European Economic Community (EEC).

India-EU FTA negotiations have been ongoing separately since 2007 with round-13 expected in mid-2026. The Nordic 5 (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden) overlap only partially with EFTA (only Iceland and Norway are in both).

 **CONCEPT NOTE**

EFTA was established in 1960 in Stockholm by the seven outer countries that did not join the EEC -- UK, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Austria, Switzerland and Portugal. Most members later moved to the EU; the four remaining members are Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

EFTA-India trade is about USD 18-20 billion, dominated by Swiss exports (precious metals, pharmaceuticals, machinery). India's key concessions: tariff cuts on industrial goods, IP commitments aligned with TRIPS+; the principal Indian gain is the binding investment commitment.

The TEPA is the first FTA with an investment commitment of this magnitude. India has signed CEPAs/CECAs with Japan (2011), Korea (2009), UAE (in force since May 2022), Australia (Eco-CTA in force since December 2022, full ECTA in force since 2025), Mauritius (2021), EFTA (2024); India-UK FTA was concluded in May 2024 and is undergoing parliamentary processes.

Q11  **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS2 -- IR, trade agreements; GS3 -- economy, FDI.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	EFTA, TEPA, FTA, CEPA, India-UK FTA, IMEC, India-Italy Joint Strategic Action Plan.
 COMMON MISTAKE	Confusing EFTA with the Nordic 5 -- only Iceland and Norway are in both groupings; the Nordic 5 also includes Denmark, Finland and Sweden, which are EU members.
 EXAM TIP	EFTA = Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland; India-EFTA TEPA signed March 10, 2024, in force October 2025, USD 100 billion investment commitment.
 INTERVIEW	Is investment commitment a credible substitute for tariff concession in a trade-and-investment agreement?

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Question 12

of 15

[Source →](#)

Which of the following is the correct legal and constitutional position about NEET-UG and centralised medical entrance in India?

- A** NEET-UG is statutorily mandated under Section 14 of the National Medical Commission Act, 2019; the Supreme Court in *Modern Dental College v. State of Madhya Pradesh (2016)* upheld a uniform entrance test; the Centre's power flows from Entry 66 of the Union List (coordination and determination of standards in higher education) ✓
- B** NEET-UG operates on the basis of a Central Government executive order with no statutory backing
- C** NEET-UG is in the State List under Entry 25 of List II
- D** The Supreme Court has struck down NEET-UG as unconstitutional

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: NEET-UG is mandated by Section 14 of the National Medical Commission Act, 2019, which replaced the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956. The Supreme Court in *Modern Dental College v. State of Madhya Pradesh (2016)* upheld a single common entrance test as compatible with Articles 19(6) and 30.

The Central Government's plenary power in respect of higher-education standards flows from Entry 66 of the Union List, which covers "coordination and determination of standards in institutions for higher education or research and scientific and technical institutions". **ANALYSIS:** Education is in the Concurrent List (Entry 25), but Entry 66 (Union List) prevails on standard-setting -- so the Centre's authority for NEET-UG is constitutionally sound.

The challenges from States such as Tamil Nadu (which has passed a Bill seeking exemption) test this Centre-State distinction; the President has not assented to the Tamil Nadu Bill.






 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The constitutional architecture of education: Education was originally a State subject (Entry 11, State List) until the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976 moved it to the Concurrent List (Entry 25). Entry 66 of the Union List has always been a Central subject for coordination and standards in higher education.

Significant cases on this distinction: *State of Tamil Nadu v. K. Shyam Sunder (2011)* and *Modern Dental College (2016)*. The National Medical Commission Act, 2019 also created the NMC (replacing MCI), four autonomous Boards (UG, PG, Medical Assessment & Rating, Ethics & Medical Registration), and a National Examination -- NEXT -- for postgraduate licensure.

The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 covers all NTA, UPSC, SSC, RRB, IBPS and similar examinations. The Radhakrishnan Committee (2024) on Examination Reforms recommended computer-based testing, multi-stage examinations, and a single secure question-paper bank.

Q12  **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS2 -- polity, federalism, Centre-State, education.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	Entry 66 Union List, Entry 25 Concurrent List, NMC Act 2019, NEET-UG, Modern Dental College, NEXT.
 COMMON MISTAKE	Locating education solely in the State List -- it has been on the Concurrent List since the 42nd Amendment (1976), and standards are an exclusive Union subject under Entry 66.
 EXAM TIP	Education -- Concurrent List Entry 25; Higher education standards -- Union List Entry 66; NEET-UG - - Section 14, NMC Act 2019.
 INTERVIEW	Should Tamil Nadu's demand for NEET exemption be considered as part of cooperative federalism, or as a breach of Entry 66?

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Question 13

of 15

[Source →](#)

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), the regulator behind the Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool, has which of the following features?

- A** A statutory body under the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 1999; headquartered at Hyderabad; insurance FDI cap raised from 74 per cent to 100 per cent (automatic route) in 2026 ✓
- B** A constitutional body under Article 324A
- C** An executive committee under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- D** The same as SEBI and PFRDA combined

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

EXPLANATION

FACT: IRDAI is a statutory body under the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 1999, with headquarters at Hyderabad. The insurance FDI cap was raised progressively: 49 per cent (Insurance Laws (Amendment) Act, 2015), 74 per cent (Finance Act, 2021), and 100 per cent (automatic route) in 2026 -- consistent with announcements in the Union Budget 2025-26.

ANALYSIS: IRDAI is not a constitutional body. SEBI (Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992) regulates the securities market; PFRDA (Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 2013) regulates the National Pension System; the three regulators are distinct.

CONCEPT NOTE

IRDAI was first constituted as an interim regulator in 1996 on the Malhotra Committee (1994) recommendation; the IRDA Act, 1999 gave it statutory status; the IRDA Act was renamed in 2014 (IRDAI Act). It has a Chairperson and nine other members (full-time and part-time).

The Insurance Laws (Amendment) Act, 2015 also enabled foreign reinsurance branches in India. The insurance industry has 24 life insurers, 27 general insurers, and 1 reinsurer (GIC Re); LIC was created under the Life Insurance Corporation Act, 1956 (still applicable post-IPO 2022).

The Bima Sugam, Bima Vistaar and Bima Vahaks framework was rolled out in 2024-25 to deepen retail insurance access.

The Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991 is a separate statutory mandate for industrial-accident cover.

Insurance comes under Entry 47 of the Union List.

Q13  **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS2 -- statutory and regulatory bodies, governance; GS3 -- economy, financial inclusion.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	IRDAI, FDI in insurance, GIC Re, Bima Sugam, IRDA Act 1999, Entry 47 Union List.
 COMMON MISTAKE	Calling IRDAI a constitutional body -- it is a statutory regulator under the IRDA Act, 1999.
 EXAM TIP	IRDAI -- statutory body; under IRDA Act, 1999; HQ Hyderabad; insurance FDI cap 100 per cent automatic since 2026.
 INTERVIEW	Should India consider a unified financial-sector regulator on the FSDC-plus model proposed by the Justice Srikrishna Financial Sector Legislative Reforms Commission (2013)?

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Question 14

of 15

[Source →](#)

Which of the following correctly describes Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) and the SATAT initiative?

- A** CBG is purified biogas (>95 per cent methane) produced by anaerobic digestion of biomass, agri-residue, cattle dung, sewage sludge or municipal solid waste; SATAT was launched on October 1, 2018 by MoP&NG and offers 15+ year offtake guarantees from oil PSUs at indexed pricing, targeting 5,000 CBG plants and 15 MMT/year of CBG ✓
- B** CBG is a fossil-fuel by-product of refining
- C** SATAT regulates the international diamond trade
- D** CBG is identical to LPG and has the same calorific value

ANSWER & ANALYSIS

 **EXPLANATION**

FACT: Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) is biogas (produced via anaerobic digestion of biomass, agri-residue, cattle dung, sewage sludge, municipal solid waste, press-mud, etc.) that has been purified to over 95 per cent methane content and compressed for use as a vehicle fuel or pipeline gas. SATAT (Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation) was launched on October 1, 2018 by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas; oil-marketing PSUs (IOCL, BPCL, HPCL) offer long-term offtake guarantees (15+ years).

The target is 5,000 CBG plants producing 15 MMT of CBG annually. **ANALYSIS:** CBG is functionally similar to CNG (Compressed Natural Gas) but biogenic and renewable; it can be blended into the existing CNG network.

As of 2026, more than 100 CBG plants have been commissioned under SATAT.






 **CONCEPT NOTE**

The National Bioenergy Programme of MNRE, Phase I (2021-22 to 2025-26), has an outlay of Rs 858 crore covering three sub-programmes: Waste-to-Energy, Biomass Programme (BPDB), and Biogas Programme. The Ethanol Blending Programme (EBP) targets E20 (20 per cent ethanol blending) by 2025-26; achieved blending is about 14-15 per cent. The Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN Yojana (2019) supports 2G ethanol plants from agri-residue (with IOCL Panipat as the flagship). Biodiesel is being promoted from non-edible oilseeds (jatropha, karanja, mahua, neem) with a B20 target by 2030.

Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) flights have been operated by Indigo and Air India since 2024 on a limited basis. The CORSIA (Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation) of ICAO becomes mandatory from 2027.

SATAT's twin objectives are energy security and farmer income (waste-valorisation).

Q14  **CONCEPT KIT**

 CROSS-PAPER	GS3 -- environment, energy, agriculture; GS2 -- policies and schemes.
 MAINS KEYWORDS	SATAT, CBG, EBP, PMJI-VAN, 2G ethanol, biodiesel B20, SAF, CORSIA, anaerobic digestion.
 COMMON MISTAKE	Equating CBG with LPG -- they have different chemical composition (methane-dominant CBG vs propane-butane LPG) and different uses.
 EXAM TIP	SATAT launched October 1, 2018; target 5,000 CBG plants and 15 MMT/year CBG; CBG = purified biogas (>95 per cent methane).
 INTERVIEW	Should CBG be allowed to count under the Renewable Purchase Obligation (RPO) framework alongside solar and wind?

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Question 15

of 15

[Source →](#)

Which of the following correctly describes the Indian Railways constitutional and statutory framework?

- A** Railways are under Entry 22, Union List (List I); governed by the Railways Act, 1989 (which replaced the Indian Railways Act, 1890); Railway Board statutory under the Indian Railway Board Act, 1905; restructured to a 5-member body in December 2019 with merged CEO & Chairman post ✓
- B** Railways are in the State List; each State runs its own railway
- C** Railways are not mentioned in the Constitution's legislative lists
- D** The Indian Railway Board was abolished in 1947 after Independence

ANSWER & ANALYSIS
EXPLANATION

FACT: Railways are placed under Entry 22 of the Union List (List I) -- making it an exclusive Union subject. The principal statute is the Railways Act, 1989, which replaced the colonial-era Indian Railways Act, 1890.

The Railway Board has been a statutory body since the Indian Railway Board Act, 1905. In December 2019 the Board was restructured from an eight-member body to a five-member body with a merged CEO & Chairman post.

ANALYSIS: This Union-exclusive status is what allows the Centre to create the South Coast Railway as the 18th zone by Gazette notification under Section 3(4) of the Railways Act, 1989, without requiring State concurrence.

CONCEPT NOTE

Indian Railways is one of the world's largest single-employer organisations and the fourth largest national rail network. The Railway Budget was historically presented separately from the Union Budget; this was discontinued in 2017 (Budget 2017-18) -- merging both.

The Indian Railway Management Service (IRMS), created in 2019, merged eight Group A services (IRTS, IRAS, IRPS, IRSME, IRSE, IRSEE, IRSSE, IRSS) into a single service. Indian Railways operates DFCCIL (Dedicated Freight Corridors - Eastern and Western), HSR projects (Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train via NHSRCL since 2017), and corporatised subsidiaries (IRCTC, IRFC, RVNL, RailTel, Konkan Railway, CRIS).

Vande Bharat trains began service in 2019 and have over 100 services by 2026. The Bullet Train uses Shinkansen E5 technology from Japan.

Q15  **CONCEPT KIT** **CROSS-PAPER**

GS2 -- polity, federalism, infrastructure governance; GS3 -- infrastructure economy.

 **MAINS KEYWORDS**

Railways Act 1989, Railway Board, IRMS, DFC, HSR, Section 3(4), Entry 22 Union List.

 **COMMON MISTAKE**

Placing Railways in the Concurrent List -- they are on the Union List (Entry 22).

 **EXAM TIP**

Railways Act 1989 replaced 1890 Act; Railway Board statutory since 1905; restructured December 2019.

 **INTERVIEW**

Should Indian Railways be corporatised into a single holding company, as recommended by various expert committees including the Debroy Committee 2015?

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CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

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